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General Assembly
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102nd plenary meeting
Friday, 25 May 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 42 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution (A/61/L.59)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 47th plenary meeting, on 3 November 2006.

I give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.59.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): On behalf of the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, I am pleased to present to the Assembly draft resolution A/61/L.59, on the United Nations Population Award, which has been sponsored by all members of the Committee, namely, Algeria, Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Peru, Sweden and Tanzania. Belarus has also asked to be added to the group of sponsors.

The purpose of the draft resolution is to ensure sustainable funding for the United Nations Population Award.

The General Assembly established the United Nations Population Award as well as the United Nations Population Award trust fund to finance the Award in 1981 by its resolution 36/201. It was then stipulated that the trust fund would be based on voluntary contributions by Member States. Since the Award's inception, awards have been given to 26 individuals and 21 institutions.

In recent years, however, the interest income from the trust fund has fallen below the monetary value of the Award and related expenditures, which has resulted in an urgent need to mobilize additional financial resources.

The draft resolution before the Assembly invites voluntary contributions from Member States. It also welcomes additional contributions from foundations, individuals and other sources. The aim is to strengthen the fund to make it possible to generate adequate interest income and sustain the Award.

By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly will be reinforcing the original objective of the Assembly in 1981: to increase recognition of the linkages between population issues and sustainable development, as well as generating further support for the important contribution of population issues to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.

I hope it can be adopted by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/61/L.59, entitled "United Nations Population Award". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.59?

Draft resolution A/61/L.59 was adopted (resolution 61/268).

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The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 42.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolution (A/61/L.60)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 47th and 48th plenary meetings, on 3 November 2006. Members will also recall that, under this item, the Assembly adopted resolutions 61/45, 61/221 and 61/255 on 4 and 20 December 2006 and 26 January 2007, respectively.

I give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.60.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): On behalf of the two main sponsors, Pakistan and the Philippines, and the other sponsors, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/61/L.60, entitled "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace", which is now before the Assembly.

Before proceeding any further, allow me to convey the profound appreciation of the main sponsors to all those who laboured for many hours during the series of informal consultations which finally gave birth to the draft resolution. Their highly commendable constructive spirit pervaded the deliberations.

The draft resolution under consideration provides general modalities for implementing paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 61/221, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", by which the Assembly decided to convene this year a high-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, in coordination with other similar initiatives in this area.

The envisioned high-level intergovernmental dialogue is to be enriched by the proposed interactive hearings between Governments and civil society, including representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly, within the time frame of, but not distinct from, the high-level dialogue. In this connection, we also look forward to interacting with religious leaders to reinforce the common and continuing quest for durable peace by all stakeholders, be they secular or sectarian.

It is hoped that the interfaith and intercultural initiatives of Pakistan and the Philippines will contribute to the attainment of this mission of the United Nations, as solemnly enshrined in the Charter: "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security".

The practice of tolerance and peaceful coexistence can be neither enforced nor legislated; it can only be voluntarily imbibed and practiced and made part of life by a person primarily on the basis of religious precepts and adherence to rich cultural values. Here lies the necessity of expanding the scope of partnership for the promotion of the culture of peace to include faith communities and non-governmental organizations that champion pluralism and revered cultural values.

Consequently, the building, promotion and enhancement of the culture of peace should encourage the mutual inclusiveness of, and mutual reinforcement by, related initiatives such as Pakistan's Enlightened Moderation, Iran's Dialogue among Civilizations, the Alliance of Civilizations of Spain and Turkey, and other noteworthy interfaith and inter-ethnic initiatives of several countries, including Albania, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and Senegal, as well as the Asia-Europe Meeting and the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue forums for the promotion of peace, development and human dignity.

I therefore humbly petition the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution by consensus so that the logistical and substantive preparations for the high-level dialogue may commence forthwith.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/61/L.60, entitled "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace". Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since the issuance of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/61/L.60: Armenia, Belarus, Cameroon, China, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Somalia, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/61/L.60?

Draft resolution A/61/L.60 was adopted (resolution 61/269).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 44.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.